



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona**

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BORDER PATROL AGENT PLEADS GUILTY TO HARBORING ILLEGAL ALIEN AND MAKING FALSE STATEMENTS

PHOENIX -- The U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on September 19, 2005, Naco Border Patrol Agent Pablo S. Berry, 23, of Douglas, Arizona, pleaded guilty to Harboring an Illegal Alien, and Making False Statements, in federal district court in Tucson.

Berry had been charged with violating Title 8 of the United States Code, Sections 1324(a)(1)(A)(iii), 1324(a)(1)(A)(v)(II) and 1324(a)(1)(B)(ii), and Title 18, United States Code Section 1001(1)(2).

Berry is a United States Border Patrol agent, assigned to the Naco Station of the Tucson Sector. At the change of plea hearing, Berry admitted that he harbored Claudia Veronica Vasquez-Banda, an illegal alien, from 2001 until February 17, 2005. Berry also admitted that he made false statements to the investigator assigned to conduct his background investigation, in order to gain employment with the United States Border Patrol. In response to the investigator's inquiry about Vasquez-Banda, Berry wrote a letter stating that he knew Vasquez-Banda was a United States citizen when he, in fact, knew she was an illegal alien.

Convictions for Harboring an Illegal Alien and Making a False Document each carry a maximum penalty of five years, a \$ 250,000.00 fine, or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Raner C. Collins will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Sentencing is set before Judge Raner C. Collins on December 1, 2005.

The investigation in this case was conducted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement Office of Professional Responsibility (ICE-OPR).

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The prosecution is being handled by Mary Sue Feldmeier, Assistant U.S. Attorney,
District of Arizona, Tucson.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-1185-TUC-RCC (HCE)
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